channels, rail-road connectivity projects, equipment upgradation/ modernization schemes and other related schemes for creation of back-up facilities have been identified for inclusion in the programme. An amount of Rs.55,804 crores is to be invested in the Port Sector under this programme.

Shortage of pilots

*355. SHRIMATI BRINDA KARAT: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the country is facing a shortage of pilots in aviation industry;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government to tackle the situation;

(c) the number of civil aviation training institutes in the country; and

(d) the details of minimum criteria for admission in these institutes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) There is no shortage of pilots. However, there is a shortage of Commanders in some category of aircraft.

(b) and (c) There are 45 civil aviation training institutes in the country approved by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for Imparting flying training.

(d) The candidate has to fulfill the requirements as enumerated in Schedule II of Aircraft Rules, 1937 for getting a particular type of licence.

Rupsi airport at Barpeta in Assam

*356. SHRI KUMAR DEEPAK DAS: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that the airport at Rupsi in Barpeta Assam was destroyed partially by the volunteers during the Independence Movement and recognize the area as a national heritage;

(b) the details of present land area of Rupsi airfield;

(c) whether maximum area of land is now under illegal occupation;

(d) if so, whether Government would remove illegal occupation there at;

(e) whether Government has any future planning over this airfield at Rupsi; and

(f) whether Government would make a proper planning for preservation of the area as the monument of the Indian Independence movement and recognize the area as a national heritage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI PRAFUL PATEL): (a) The information is being collected from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the concerned Department.

(b) The land area of Rupsi airfield is 447.416 acres.

(c) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has reported that as per the land inspection report of the airport, there is no encroachments at this airport.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) Government have received requests to develop Rupsi airport in Assam. However, Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) through Government of Assam have requested for a Greenfield airport at Kokrajhar. The site identified by the Government of Assam for Kokrajhar airport was not found suitable and the two alternate sites proposed by the State Government are being evaluated by AAI.

(f) The information is being collected from Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), the concerned Department.

Impact of below zero inflation

†357. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that despite the rate of inflation being lower than zero, the prices of the items of daily use and of general food products are on the rise;

(b) if so, whether Government is making any effective plan to control the prices and the market;

(c) whether the rate of inflation dipping below zero level is not resulting in the contraction of currency; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) The overall monthly average Wholesale Price Index (WPI) based inflation was 4.9 per cent in January 2009. It declined to 1.2 per cent and 1.3 per cent in March and April, 2009 respectively, and further to 0.4 per cent (Provisional) in May, 2009. It became negative to (-) 1.4 per cent (Provisional) in June, 2009. Despite fall in overall inflation, for some of the food products and items of daily use like tea and sugar, it continues to remain high on account of lower production, increase in the minimum support prices and growth in demand.

(b) The Government monitors the price situation regularly, with price stability being high on its agenda. Measures taken to contain prices of essential commodities include selective ban on exports and futures trading in food grains, zero import duty on select food items, permitting imports of pulses and sugar by public sector undertakings, distribution of imported pulses and edible oils through the PDS and release of higher quota of non-levy sugar. In addition, the State Governments are empowered to act against hoarders of food items, by holding in abeyance the removal of restrictions on licensing, stock limits and movements of food articles under the Essential Commodities Act of 1955.

(c) and (d) It is difficult to link the fall in WPI inflation as leading to contraction in money supply. Money supply is denoted by Money Stock (M3 - Broad Money). Since changes in Broad Money are impacted by the interplay of various complex monetary and economic variables, no one-to-one link

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.